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## William C. Nelson to Maria C. Nelson (29 October 1862)

William Cowper Nelson

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Camp of the 17<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Regiment,  
near Winchester, Va. Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> 1862.

My Dearest Mother;

It has been now nearly four weeks since I have heard a word from you, the last letter being that sent by Capt. Goran. I feel very uneasy about you all, as other members of the company have received letters of as late date as the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month, they bring intelligence that the hateful invaders are once more in our County, but that our army was fortifying Holly Springs, and expected to retain it at all hazards. I can appreciate what your annoyances will be, now that a large army is camped in the vicinity. I expect that everything in the provision line will rise to fabulous prices, and be difficult to procure at all.

We are still remaining in the vicinity of Winchester, having a very quiet time, the Yankees not molesting us in the least; the weather for the past few days however, has been interfering with our comfort considerably, it has turned really cold, and what with the wind and rain, makes bivouacking rather more romantic than pleasant. We are still without tents, and few have more than one blanket, many have not even one, but still we are cheerful, and our seldom hears a complaint. The Government furnishes us with straw, we can get plenty of wood, and we build huge fires, and construct our shanties in front of them, and thus manage to get along pretty comfortable, when it don't rain; when it does, St. Clayton and myself generally manage to get a berth in the Adjutant's tent, and so on the whole, we fare quite well. We are living in hope, that it will not be very long, before we will get orders to go in Winter Quarters, and then we expect to do better.



On yesterday we had a grand Review, before Genl Lee. there was quite large assembly of ladies present, among them two daughters of Genl Lee. although parades and reviews are not the forte of the Rebel Army, still we made a very creditable display; when the colors of our Regt. passed the old general, he took off his hat, in respect to its tattered and faded appearance, it has received so many shot, shell &c. that it merely bears the semblance of a flag now, and is hardly deserving of the name of colors, as the red, and blue, all appear to be one color now.

Since I commenced writing, your welcome letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. has been received. I was of course rejoiced to hear from you, although my heart was made sad, by the painful intelligence, of the death of little Betty. I deeply sympathize with my dear Sister in this her severe affliction. I enclose in this letter one to her, which you will probably have some opportunity of sending to her.

I don't know that I much regret the loss of Stephen, I have thought that this war was ordered by Providence, as a means of settling definitely and conclusively the question of slavery; if slavery is a divine institution, I believe that we will be successful, that our independence will be recognized, and the Southern Confederacy will be established as a Government with slavery as its great distinctive feature, if on the contrary, slavery is a curse, and obnoxious to All-wise and Good Creator I believe that he will make this war, the means of abolishing it from the face of the earth. I have the greatest confidence in the wisdom of God, and believe that all things work together for good to them that love God.

Capt. Sears is still absent from the Regt. at the Va. Hot Springs. I don't know where Cousin Alice is. I delivered your message to Frank Smith. He is very well. Love to all friends.

Yours loving Son, Will: C. Nelson.

On yesterday we had a grand Review, before Genl Lee. there was quite large assembly of ladies present, among them two daughters of Genl Lee. although parades and reviews are not the forte of the Rebel Army, still we made a very creditable display; when the colors of our Regt. passed the old general, he took off his hat, in respect to its tattered and faded appearance, it has received so many shot & shell &c. that it merely bears the semblance of a flag now, and is hardly deserving of the name of colors, as the red, and blue, all appear to be one color now.

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